

1998, which corresponds to the actual U.S. filing date of the '593 patent. The actual U.S. filing date of the present application is December 24, 1998. However, the present application claims priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 to Japanese Patent Application No. 9-360932, filed December 26, 1997. Therefore, in order to perfect this claim to foreign priority in the present application, submitted herewith is a certified English language translation of Japanese Patent Application No. 9-360932. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that the '593 patent does not qualify as a *prima facie* prior art reference against the claims in the present application. Accordingly, the rejection of Claim 11 in the outstanding Office Action should be withdrawn.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 11 patentably distinguishes over the cited references. Consequently, in light of the above discussion the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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